

VZCZCXRO3809
RR RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHBC #0084/01 2541016
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 111016Z SEP 07
FM REO BASRAH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0599
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0181
INFO RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDHP/DIA DHP-1 WASHINGTON DC
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0042
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUEHBC/REO BASRAH 0631

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BASRAH 000084

SIPDIS

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 9/11/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: FADHILA NOT TAKING CHANCES ON BASRAH GOVERNOR'S COURT CASE

REF: A) BASRAH 38 B) BASRAH 44 C) BASRAH 53 D) BASRAH 71 E) BASRAH 77

BASRAH 00000084 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Louis Bono, Regional Coordinator, Regional
Embassy Office Basrah, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

(U) SUMMARY

11. (S/NF) Fadhila member Aqueel Talib provided the REO director on September 8, a letter from Council of Representatives Speaker Mahmoud Mashadani to Prime Minister Maliki. The letter supports Basrah Governor Muhammed Wa'eli (Fadhila) in his court case against the Provincial Council's (PC) no-confidence vote. Fadhila is exerting its influence over PC members to ensure that if the High Tribunal Court finds the PC's vote improper, then subsequent no-confidence votes are doomed to fail. Meanwhile, the Iranian Ambassador to Iraq reportedly told Maliki to force Wa'eli out or risk losing Iranian support. MND-SE officials are contemplating reengagement with Wa'eli given the prospects that he may actually remain in office. The Badr Organization-Sadrists alliance of convenience to depose the Governor is at an end, while Fadhila ends its dialogue with the Badr-led Basrah Islamic List (BIL) and focuses its attention on the Sadrists. End Summary.

(C) MASHADANI SUPPORTS BASRAH'S GOVERNOR

12. (C) Mashadani's letter states that the PC's vote of no confidence against the Governor violated the law and the PC's own rules of procedure because it was undertaken door-to-door instead of in the Council chamber (ref A). Mashadani also wrote that Maliki's letter demanding Wa'eli to step down violated the constitution, claiming he did not have such authority and demanded that all efforts to depose the Governor cease in order to allow the pending court case to decide Wa'eli's fate (ref B). (Note: Mashadani is likely referring to the SYG of the Council of Minister's letter calling for the governor to leave office. End note.)

(C) FADHILA FLEXES ITS MUSCLES WITH COUNCIL

13. (C) According to Talib, Fadhila is taking measures to ensure

that if the Court rules the original vote improper, then the PC will lack enough votes to depose the Governor in a second no-confidence vote. Talib told us that Fadhila has approached PC members who might have been intimidated to vote against the Governor and offered them Fadhila's protection.

¶4. (C) Talib also told us the Governor had the Ministry of Education (MOE) investigate whether some PC members possess the requisite high school education for PC membership according to the law. The MOE (controlled by Badr) responded that five PC members did not have diplomas from schools they listed on their applications for PC membership. The REO director asked if it mattered whether they received their education outside of Iraq. Talib reasoned that a foreign education was permissible if it was reported correctly to the MOE. In this case, they did not, making their applications for PC membership fraudulent. The five members were: Wa'eli's arch-rival Hassan al-Rashid (Badr) and Second Deputy Chairman Khalif Shamhud Bustan (Iraqi National Accord), Hakim Abdul Sahib Kadum (Iraqi Labor), Abd al-Hussain Naser (aka Abu Fatima al-Bazuni - Iraqi Hizbollah Movement), and Basim Saddam Muhsin (Iraqi Hizbollah Movement).

(S/NF) IRAN TELLS MALIKI TO DUMP WA'ELI

¶5. (S/NF) Talib, a Wa'eli confidante, later called the director to report that the Iranian Ambassador to Iraq Hasan Kazemi-Qomi met with PM Maliki earlier that day, telling the PM to remove Wa'eli or risk losing Iranian support. Talib opined that the Iranians were pushing harder to spread their influence in Basrah (ref C). Comment: We cannot verify Talib's claim about the meeting, but we believe that Wa'eli's ties with Iran are tenuous at best. Wa'eli is likely seeking U.S. support as a counter to Iranian pressure. End Comment.

(C) FADHILA AND THE BRITISH

BASRAH 00000084 002.2 OF 002

¶6. (C/NF) Talib said that on September 7, a very senior member of Fadhila met with British officials to discuss reengagement with the Wa'eli, who UK representatives have refused to meet with for months. British officials have reported that in early July, Maliki requested HMA Dominic Asquith to sever ties with Wa'eli. Talib also said that Wa'eli remains upset with the British for their perceived hostility toward him and support for al-Rashid (ref D). (Note: We have encouraged the British to meet with Wa'eli. End Note.)

(U) SOME ALLIANCES OVER, OTHERS BEGIN

¶7. (C) Talib said that the relationship between Badr and the Sadrists was not as bad as it has become in nearby provinces, but the Basrah Sadrists have been directed by their superiors in Karbala to cease their cooperation with Badr to depose Wa'eli. Talib noted, however, that Iranian influenced Jaish al-Mahdi elements were not taking their instructions from Karbala and still opposed the governor. He also said that the Sadrists and Fadhila recently met in Najaf to discuss cooperation, while the secret meetings between Fadhila and the Basrah Islamic List (BIL

SIPDIS

- led by the Islamic Supreme Council in Iraq/Badr) were over (ref E).

(U) COMMENT

¶8. (C) Fadhila is leaving nothing to chance by shoring up additional support for Wa'eli's court case and influencing the non-aligned PC members from supporting another coup attempt. But if Wa'eli attempts to use the fraudulent education credentials as a pretext for removing his adversaries from the PC, it could raise the ire of BIL, particularly Badr. The

changing alliances show how fluid and fragile politics are in Basrah mostly as a result of the incessant competition for control over Basrah's governing institutions and its resources.
BONO